



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, November 12, 2010

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Press_Releases/index.html

Woman Pleads Guilty to Knowingly Taking Payments in “Dead Payee” Case - Kept Taking Mother’s Retirement Benefits, Despite Mother’s Death-

WASHINGTON - A 31-year-old District of Columbia woman, Yolanda Powers, has pled guilty to a felony charge of conversion of public money for taking for herself of \$35,000 in payments, paid by the federal government into her mother’s bank account, based on her mother’s retirement, after her mother’s death, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today.

Powers entered her guilty plea on November 10, 2010 before United States Magistrate Judge Alan Kay in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. When Powers is sentenced on January 31, 2011, before United States District Judge Ellen S. Huvelle, she faces up to 10 years of imprisonment, but a likely sentence of 6 to 12 months of home detention under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. As part of her plea agreement, Powers agreed to make full restitution to the United States Treasury.

According to the government’s evidence, Powers’s mother, Carol Powers, had just retired, and the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) was in the process of setting up retirement annuity payments to her, when Carol Powers died on April 1, 2008.

Thereafter, between June 2008 and March 2009, 11 retirement annuity payments, totaling \$35,016.26, were deposited into the account of Carol Powers at the NASA Federal Credit Union. Knowing she was not entitled to the money, defendant Yolanda Powers nevertheless took all of the \$35,000 from the account, using various methods including ATM withdrawals, check card transactions, checks written on the account, and telephonic transfers (to a joint account to which she had access) in which she represented herself to be her mother.

In announcing the guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Special Agent Nunzio Orlando of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Office of the Inspector General, and Special Agent Michele Carter of the District of Columbia Office of the Inspector General. He also acknowledged the efforts of Legal Assistant Jamasee Lucas and SEEP Student Sierra Tate, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Friedman, who is handling this prosecution.

10-313

###